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ABSTRACT

Trade and communication networks established by Indian groups in the 15th century A.D. linked the Southwest to Mesoamerica, the Plains and the Pacific littoral; these routes were later used by the Spanish and Americans, and today major highways follow ancient Indian routes. The main east-west route had major termini at Cibola (near Zuni) in the west and Pecos in the east; the north-south trunk road followed the Rio Grande from Taos south to the El Paso area, and was later extended by the Spanish to southern Chihuahua and called the Camino Real. From their arrival in the 1530's the Spanish, primarily concerned with reaching and controlling Indian settlements and resource areas, used Indian routes. Trails were widened for cart and pack animal transportation, but few other modifications were made. In the 16th century, the region split into two administrative divisions: upper (New Mexico) and lower (Sonora); the Camino Real fell into disuse until its reestablishment in the late 18th century. Before and after arrival of the Americans, new roads were built in previously unsettled areas because decline in Indian populations led to relocation of important centers, new technology opened up uninhabited regions, and railroads and automobiles demanded flatter terrain than the old roads. (MH)

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INDIAN-SPANISH COMMUNICATION NETWORKS: CONTINUITY IN THE GREATER SOUTHWEST

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Beginning in the 15th century A.D. and building on earlier trails, the various Indian groups in the Greater Southwest began to establish a network that not only linked the southwestern subregions but tied the Southwest to Mesoamerica, the Plains, and the Pacific littoral. Along the routes spread a series of trade goods. These included bright colored feathers and the birds that produced them, bison products, shell, colored minerals, turquoise, cotton, salt, and slaves. Some of this trade was in raw materials and some in manufactured form -- examples of the latter being fibrolite axes, shell-turquoise- and peridot jewelry, pottery, and cotton cloth.

With the trade came an interchange of social, political, economic, and religious ideas, some of which left traces remaining to this day. From the 1530s, the trails became highroads for Spanish trade goods, domesticated animals, and new technologies. More ominous, the trails also provided the mode

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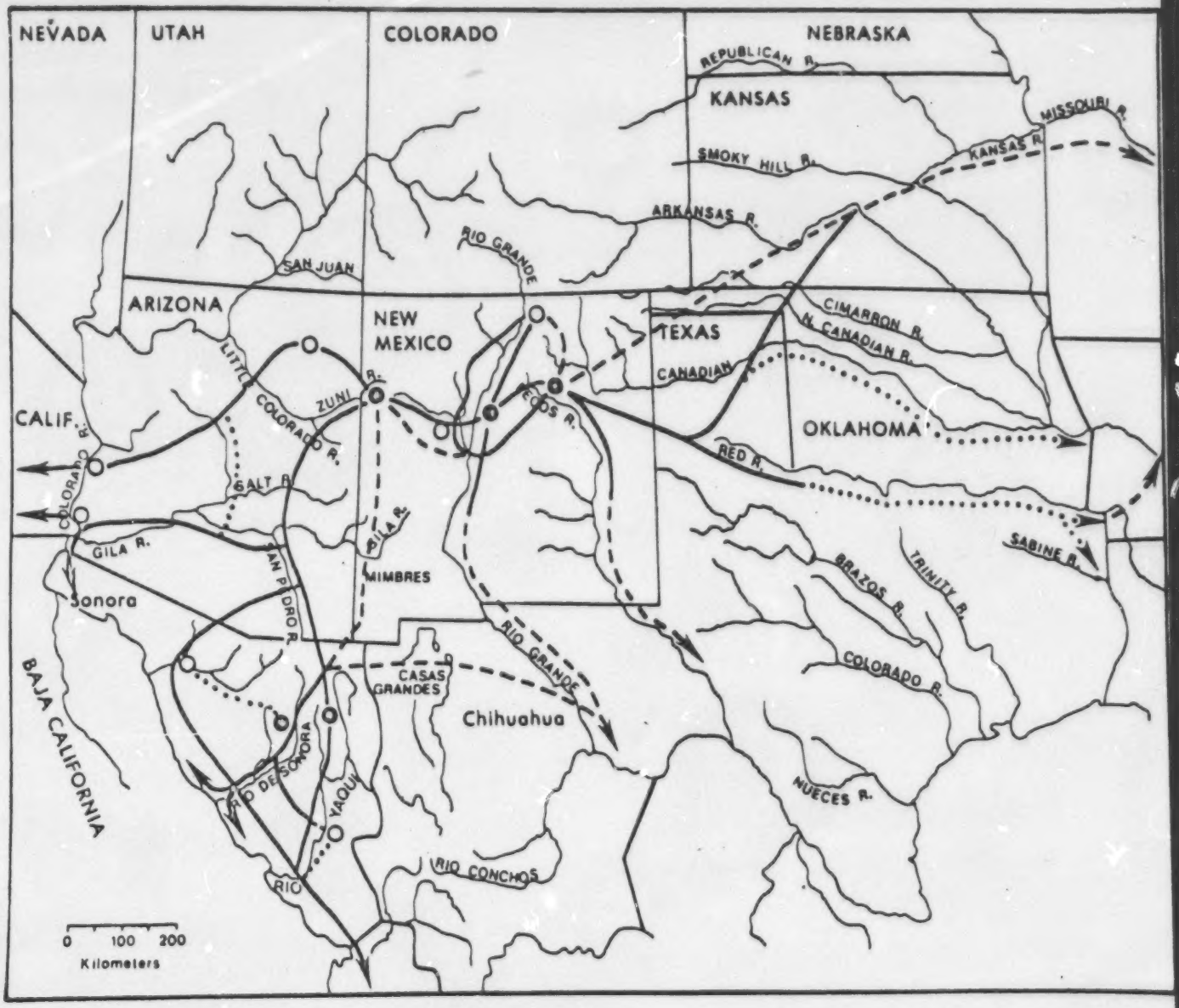
TRADE ROUTES IN THE GREATER SOUTHWEST c A.D. 1500



- MAJOR REDISTRIBUTION CENTERS
- SECONDARY CENTERS

- MAJOR TRADE ROUTES
- SECONDARY ROUTES
- HYPOTHETICAL ROUTES

of entry for Spanish diseases and Spanish armed forces. The Spaniards utilized the Indian routes for, especially in the early decades, they were primarily concerned with reaching and controlling Indian settlements and resource areas. Not till the 18th century was Spanish population sufficiently great and diversified to spread beyond primary Indian areas. Even then, the roads and trails into new areas generally followed older Indian ones. There were a few exceptions, especially by the 18th century, when Spanish roads began to be built in essentially virgin areas -- mainly to meet new administrative and military needs that reflected the growing importance of the northern borderlands of Spanish America to the larger world of European politics.

Many of the Indian trade routes that were followed by the Spaniards can be more or less reconstructed today. Two major termini in the Southwest were Cibola on the west and Pecos on the east. Both were redistribution centers for goods coming from outside the Southwest. The Cibolan towns stood at the juncture of two major roads, one leading from Sonora and eventually from Mesoamerica, the other connecting Cibola with Tusayan-Hopi and, through Tusayan, the central Arizona mines and the Pacific coast. From the juncture of these two routes a third major one ran eastward through the Zuni mountains to Acoma. A spur went to Zia and the other Jemez River towns but the main route continued eastward to Tiguex on the middle Rio

Grande. From Tiguex and the southern Querex towns the route probably followed Galisteo wash to the Tanos towns and Glorieta pass to Pecos on the upper Pecos river. The latter pueblo was the major entry point in the 16th century, especially for bison products and fibrolite. However, bison and other Plains products (shell, pottery, flint, and bow-wood) also entered the Southwest at Taos, Picuris, and the Salinas pueblos, and from those towns quickly entered the major north-south road.

This north-south trunk road seemed to have extended along or near the Rio Grande from Taos southward at least to the El Paso area. Along the Rio Grande, villages of Indians speaking various dialects of Tanoan and Queresan were strung like pearls, and the road undulated its way through the densest population in all the Southwest.

There were important secondary routes. One led up the Jemez river and then, perhaps, north and northeastward to the Tewa country. A second route ran from the eastern fringe of Cibola, south of the Acoma malpais, to the Datil-Magdalena-Socorro area. At that point the traveler could join the north-south trunk road or go on eastward by an easy trail to the Salinas pueblos. This route, for whatever political or economic reasons, effectly bypassed Acoma and Tiguex, and gave Cibolans direct contact with the Piro-Tompiro towns.

The Spanish conquerors of the Southwest retained many of the Indian roads. The two great routes that stretched north

and south, and east and west through New Mexico -- crossing in Tiguex -- became absolutely basic. The Spaniards of San Felipe de Nuevo Mexico (which included the northern two-thirds of Arizona) utilized the Rio Grande north-south route and the Cibola-Pecos east-west route to form their own primary grid for the Southwestern transportation network. One major modification was that the Rio Grande road was extended from El Paso southward to the Spanish base in southern Chihuahua and became the major supply link for the colony. The trails were widened to allow cart and pack-animal transportation but relatively little major modification in the way of bridges, causeways, way-stations, or military posts was made. The same is true of the secondary routes. For the most part they also followed the original Indian trails, for the Spanish centralized political and ecclesiastical organizations both aimed at Indian towns that had long been focal points and redistribution centers linked by the native roads.

One dramatic change did take place as a very early result of an administrative division having to do with competing missionary groups. Largely because of particular Spanish religious strategies worked out in the 16th century, the upper and lower Southwest became separated and administrated by different Spaniards with different programs and aims. This division of the frontier into a Franciscan New Mexico and a Jesuit Sonora -- combined with native population decline and

lessening of cultural vigor -- produced two Southwests, each increasingly isolated from the other. The Camino Real from the Sonoran towns to Cibola fell into almost complete disuse in the 17th and most of the 18th centuries. Only after the mid-18th century were there serious attempts to reunite the two regions. The route was not forgotten however. Bishop Tameron had heard of it in 1760. Following the organization of the Provincias Internas in 1776 the Southwest was actually reunited for a time and the Camino Real was reestablished in the 1780s and 1790s. We think it likely that the Spanish expeditions of those years, going from Sonora to Zuni, more-or-less followed in the footsteps of Coronado and the myriad Indian traders that had gone before him over the Camino Real.

In somewhat the same way, the Cibola-Tusayan route to the Verde valley mines and on to the lower Colorado and the Pacific ocean -- pioneered in one part or another by one of Coronado's parties (1540), by Espejo (1582-3) and by Oñate (1604-5) -- began to be rethought if not significantly reexplored. By this time, of course, there was an important Spanish presence in California.

Americans at first followed the Indian and Spanish trails through the Southwest and, today, major roadways still follow the line of the ancient Indian routes. Certain events, however, did lead to changes in the configuration of the communications network. Even before the arrival of the Americans, a

sharp decline in Indian population and a slow growth of Hispanic population had led to certain relocations of important centers. Under the Americans this emphasis became much more pronounced. Regions essentially uninhabited by settled agricultural and town living Indians or Spaniards (for example the San Juan valley) now received farmers and ranchers. Basic economic changes -- new mining and ranching techniques and more sophisticated methods of water control -- led to the populating of hitherto deserted or very sparsely settled areas. New roads were needed to reach these communities. At the same time the importance of many of the Indian centers declined, a process that, as indicated above, had begun much earlier.

Most telling of all, however, was the fact that the Southwest changed dramatically in its relationship to other parts of the continent during the course of the 19th century. Both in pre-Spanish times and under Spanish rule the area had been a frontier to the rich heartland of Mesoamerica and its successor, highland Mexico. Under the Americans the Southwest was no longer a frontier in the sense of being a margin but was a region sandwiched between the economically vital and powerful American east and west coasts. Roads no longer merely went to the Southwest; the major ones went through the area. Added to this were the new demands brought first by the technology of the railroad, and then by that of the automobile road. Among other things use of these new road systems dic-

tated particular terrains. Only the Rio Grande north-south route remained relatively unchanged, in large part because the Rio Grande continued to be the population center for this part of the Southwest. Even here the Tewa and Northern Tiwa portions of the road were relegated to secondary status while the main route now ran from the new mining and mercantile metropolis of Denver, east of the mountains and across Glorieta pass, skirting the ruins of Pecos.

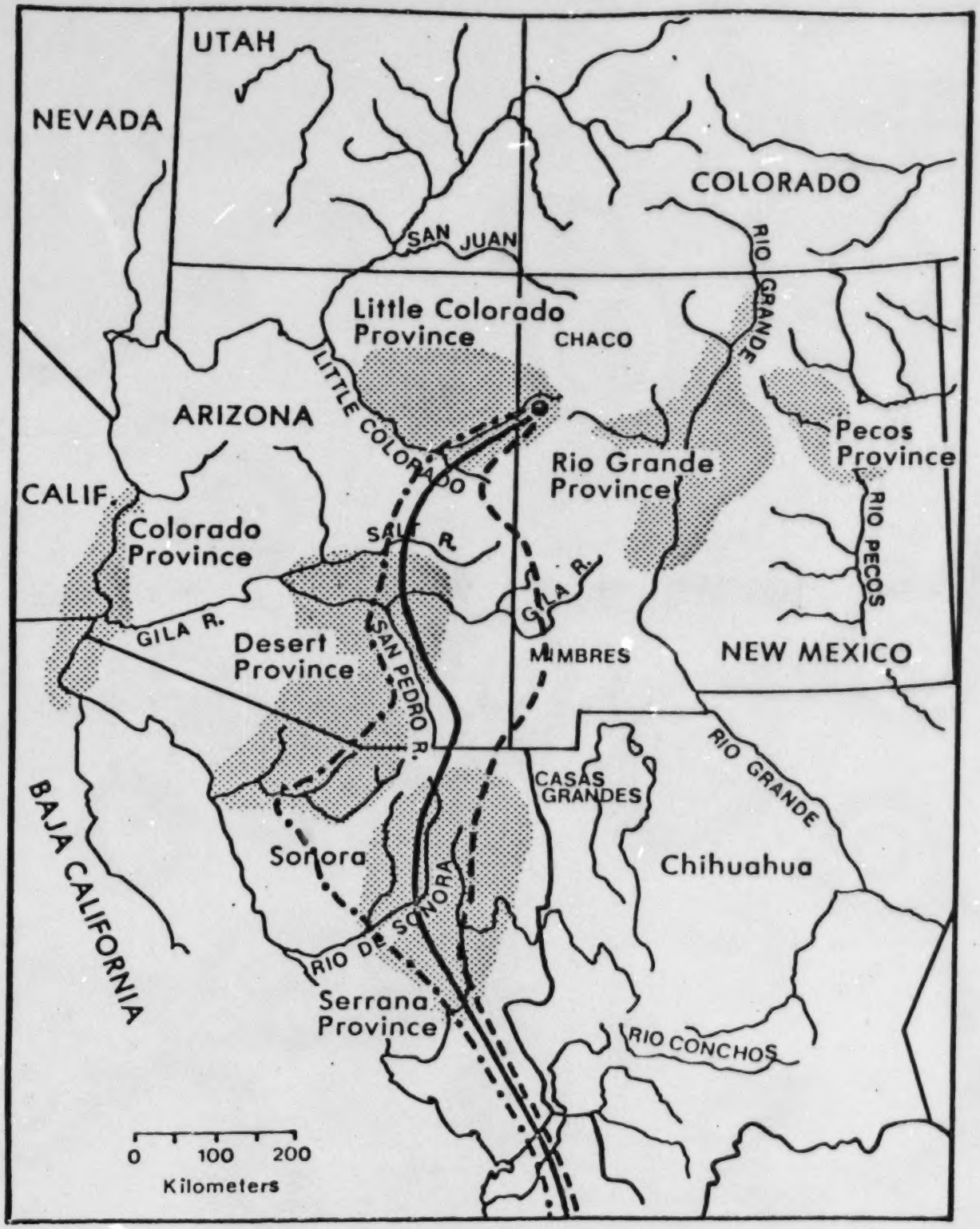
The new major east-west route cut straight across the arid but flat land of eastern New Mexico, and west of the Rio Grande followed the gentle slopes of the Puerco of the West. These regions were almost devoid of native Indian towns and had long been vulnerable to raids from Apache and Comanche nomads in the east and Navajo Indians in the west. The technology that produced the railroad also produced the military hardware that after a bitter struggle, ended nomadic Indian raids.

To the south in New Mexico railroads and highways were flung across the flat but water-deficient Basin country -- again, virgin territory. Transnational highways in the 20th century again link the upper Southwest with Sonora but they follow new routes and serve new peoples. The great Camino Real that led Coronado from Mesoamerica to search for the golden cities of Cibola can still be reconstructed in its northern, American, portion. In fact, there are at least three modern highways that follow what one-or-the-other scholar

has identified as the northern segment of the Camino Real (one actually having the popular name "Coronado's Trail").

The Sonoran portion of the Camino Real, however, fell into disuse after the first decades of the 19th century as the center of Sonoran life shifted west of the mountains where the new railroads followed flat terrain. In the last 20 years, however, a series of new roads have been threaded through the various valleys of the Sonora and Yaqui river drainages. One or another of these routes is surely the Sonoran portion of the Camino Real, but its certain reconstruction must be left to future research.

EARLY SPANISH ROUTES TO CIBOLA



PROPOSED ROUTE ESTEBAN - MARCOS, 1539 ·—·—·

POSSIBLE ROUTES FOR CORONADO, 1540
PROPOSED ROUTE 1 ———
PROPOSED ROUTE 2 – – –